

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1.-10. (Canceled)

11. (New) A cassette, comprising:

a frame member having at least two sides interconnected by a cross member; and

a reinforcement material partially encapsulated by and suspended by the at least two sides of said frame member such that the reinforcement material is positioned at a predetermined location when placed in a mold tool.

12. (New) The cassette of claim 11, wherein said frame member includes a spacer lug for positioning said reinforcement material at the predetermined location within the mold tool.

13. (New) The cassette of claim 11, wherein the at least two sides are two opposing sides, and wherein the reinforcement material is secured to the two opposite sides of the frame member.

14. (New) An interior trim panel, comprising:

a layer of material, and

a cassette disposed within the layer of material, the cassette including a frame member having at least two sides interconnected by a cross member, and a reinforcement material partially encapsulated by and suspended by the at least two sides of said frame member, wherein the reinforcement material is positioned at a predetermined location within the layer of material.

15. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 14, further comprising a shear plane located at an intersection of the frame member and the layer of material.

16. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 15, wherein the frame member comprises material having a first mold characteristic and the layer of material has a second mold characteristic that is at least partially incompatible with the first mold characteristic of the frame member such that the incompatibility substantially defines the shear plane.

17. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 16, wherein the first mold characteristic and the second mold characteristic are fully incompatible.

18. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 14, wherein the frame member and the layer of material are bondably attached.

19. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 15, further comprising a knife edge on the frame member substantially aligned with the shear plane

20. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 18 wherein the frame member and the layer of material is are not fully bondably attached and define the shear plane.

21. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 14, further comprising an outer cassette member for positioning the reinforcement material outside a tear seam of the trim panel.

22. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 14, wherein the cassette further comprises at least one spacer lug for positioning the reinforcement material.

23. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 14, wherein the frame member includes two opposing sides, and wherein the reinforcement material is secured to the two opposite sides of the frame member.

24. (New) An interior trim panel, comprising:

a layer of material;

a reinforcement material; and

means for partially encapsulating and suspending said reinforcement material to define a cassette such that said reinforcement material is positioned at a predetermined location when placed in a mold tool.

25. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 24, wherein the partially encapsulating and suspending means is selected from the group consisting of a frame member and a spine having ribs.

26. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 24, wherein the partially encapsulating and suspending means is a frame member comprising at least two sides interconnected by a cross

member, and wherein said reinforcement material is partially encapsulated by and suspended by the at least two sides of said frame member.

27. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 24, further comprising a shear plane defined at an interface between the partially encapsulating and suspending means and the layer of material.

28. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 27, wherein the partially encapsulating and suspending means has a first mold characteristic and the layer of material has a second mold characteristic that is incompatible with the first mold characteristic such that the incompatibility therebetween defines the shear plane.

29. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 27, further comprising a knife edge on the partially encapsulating and suspending means substantially aligned with the shear plane

30. (New) The interior trim panel of claim 24, further comprising an outer cassette member for positioning the reinforcement material outside a tear seam of the trim panel.